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ABSTRACT

This study of four public libraries in Northeastern Ohio was conducted to determine the amount, if any, of restriction of access of materials to minors. Four libraries were opportunistically selected, and the director and children's librarian in each were interviewed. The emerging hypothesis was that some restriction would occur. The written policies and procedures of each library were examined to determine if they were practiced in reality. The study determined that there is a trend toward restriction of audiovisual material, especially video cassette tapes, to those under 18. Other less obvious restrictions on print material are also covered in this study. Through reading the literature on this topic, it was determined that these libraries are not unusual in their practice of restricting video tapes to adults only. The interview schedules are appended. (Contains 13 references.) (Author/JLB)

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A STUDY OF FOUR PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN NORTHEASTERN OHIO TO DETERMINE THE RESTRICTION OF ACCESS OF MATERIALS TO CHILDREN

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State School of Library and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Library Science

by

Gretchen McHenry Wright

November 10, 1993

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ABSTRACT

This study of four public libraries in Northeastern Ohio was conducted to determine the amount, if any, of restriction of access of materials to minors. Four libraries were opportunistically selected and the Director and Children's Librarian in each was interviewed, totaling eight interviews. The emerging hypothesis was that some restriction would occur. The written policies and procedures of each library were examined to determine if they were practiced in reality. The study determined that there is a trend for restriction of audio visual material, especially video cassette tapes, to those under 18. Other less obvious restriction of print material is also covered in this study. Through reading the literature on this topic it was determined that these libraries are not unusual in their practice of restricting video tapes to adults only.

Master's Research Paper by

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B.A., Kent State University, 1992

M.L.S., Kent State University, 1993

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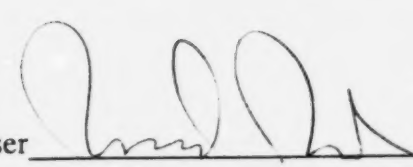
Adviser  Date 11-10-93

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Article 5 of the American Library Association Bill of Rights states that "A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views." The inclusion of the word "age" was incorporated in 1967 because "young people are entitled to the same access to libraries and to the materials in libraries as are adults." If this is not clear enough, Article 5 has been further interpreted: "All limitations on minors' access to library materials and services violate [Article 5]."

Lillian Gerhardt feels that "No statement of group intent could have been clearer."[1] Libraries *must* give children equal access to materials if they wish to comply with the ALA Bill of Rights. In 1967, as Gerhardt explains, the revision of the Library Bill of Rights was well in advance of society in general, and many librarians were not ready to deal with this new concept.

For several years this Article was debated and was a source of constant confusion. On June 30, 1972 the ALA adopted as both a policy and an interpretation of the Bill of Rights, "Free Access to Libraries for Minors" which points out six forms of restriction: "restricted reading rooms for adult use only, library cards limiting circulation of some materials to adults only, closed collections for adult use only, interlibrary loan service for adult use only. . . materials or services [withheld from minors] because of actual or suspected parental objection. . .[and restrictive] selection policies." Gerhardt goes on to point out that

the "only instance designated by this ALA policy for which restriction of access or limitation on use is justified is for the protection of *genuinely rare or irreplaceable materials or very costly works.*" [Emphasis mine]

This study was conducted on four opportunistically selected libraries in Northeastern Ohio to determine how much, if any, restriction of access of materials to children occurs. The libraries were selected from a geographic location that was convenient to the researcher on the basis of willingness to participate in the study. The first four libraries that agreed to participate were studied. The emerging hypothesis was that there would be some restriction of materials, and that the study would conclude to what degree materials are restricted.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although no studies on this subject have been done before in this area of Northeastern Ohio, there is a great deal of information concerning restriction of access to children. In conducting the literature search LISA, ERIC, and *Library Literature* were searched on CD-ROM from 1965 through 1992. The Catalyst on-line catalog was also used.

An article by Lillian Gerhardt deals extensively with the restriction of access of materials to children.[2] She discusses the interpretations of Article 5 of the Bill of Rights declaring that "no statement of group intent could have been clearer." She finds in her study of one public library that restriction does occur. She not only deals with traditional forms of restriction such as "adults only" areas of the collection and censorship in selection but other more subtle aspects of restriction like the amount of publicity that the library engages

in, the availability of public transportation, the number of hours that a library is open, and how the budget could affect access to children. Although these particular aspects will not be discussed in this paper, this article was very valuable in pointing out the importance of upholding the rights of children as valued members of our society. Duane H. Meyers is concerned about the intellectual freedom rights of children. He feels that adults will fight for their own rights, but are either "ambivalent about, or downright hostile to, ideas favoring *children's* rights."[3]

Robert Pierson delves into the idea that intellectual activity is hampered by ignorance of prior intellectual activity. He feels that in order for children to become critical thinkers later in life, that they must be exposed to a multitude of thoughts and ideas while young, and that restriction of access to these ideas can cause them to be less fully rounded adults.[4]

Doug Anderson, Dorothy Broderick, and Judith Serebnick address the issue of selection of library materials and how selection can restrict access in more subtle ways than one might realize.[5] [6] [7]

An interesting article by Kay Vandergrift questions whether libraries view children and teenagers as second class users. She feels that many aspects of the library may limit use by children including the card catalog, collection and selection policies, and rules concerning circulation. Vandergrift recognizes that children are often restricted from using much of the material in a library. She also brings up interesting points about restriction of access through the use of Library of Congress subject headings in the card catalog.[8]

Pointing out that LC subject headings are often confusing even to adults, Vandergrift notes that children and teenagers are often not able to find things at all because the

headings don't reflect everyday usage of the language.[9] This is why there is a sub-group of LC subject headings for children, and it will be interesting to discover if any of the libraries targeted in this study use them.

Diana Young addresses related issues in her article "Library Service to Children--A Job or a Profession?" She argues that service to children is very important and feels that the library must welcome children enthusiastically because children sense when they are not welcome and if a librarian is not interested in their queries. Young feels that "libraries, together with other community agencies, should provide and ensure access by all children to information services that include a diversity of media, both print and nonprint. . ."[10]

Margaret Mary Kimmel discusses the relatively modern idea that children have rights as individuals. She explains how, historically, children have been viewed as the property of their parents with little or no rights and how library service to children has "traditionally been a part of a movement to save the child, to protect and defend the individual and the family as an institution."[11]

Marilyn L. Miller discusses the dilemma that librarians face when dealing with minors: "Because the whole issue of children before the law is still being debated, defined, and clarified, the librarian faces a dilemma. Librarians believe that in a democratic society access to information is a basic right . . . Children . . . must be assured of up-to-date, honest information."[12]

The topic of the access of audio visual materials by minors is covered with differing viewpoints by Will Manley and John Hurley. Manley feels that videos in libraries are almost more trouble than they are worth while Hurley feels that children should not be

discriminated against when borrowing video tapes.[13] [14] Norton Webster, Legal Counsel to the Ohio Library Association addresses the possible legal ramifications to restriction of audio visual materials to minors.[15]

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted with four opportunistically selected public libraries in Northeastern Ohio. The methodology in this study was integrated, using direct observation of the collections and personal interviews with the library director and children's librarian at each library, totaling eight interviews. A series of questions was asked of each librarian (See Appendix A) covering such topics as age requirements for use of the collection and obtaining library cards, selection policies, and any other types of age restrictions that the library might engage in. Any written policies that applied to access to the collection and were readily available to the public were reviewed as well. The actual physical arrangement of the collections was evaluated to determine if it restricted access for children in any way.

The data were evaluated by compiling the results of the interviews and observations to see if access was in any way denied to children. Careful examination of the responses to the interviews also determined whether the written policies of the library are followed in actuality. The conclusions and implications based on the data collected are discussed.

CHAPTER II

DATA ANALYSIS

For clarity the libraries will be referred to as Library A, Library B, Library C, and Library D. Each librarian interviewed will be referred to as Library Director A or Children's Librarian A, etc. to correspond with the library in which that particular person works.

RESULTS

AUDIO VISUAL MATERIALS

Restriction of audio visual materials is very common in many libraries, and the four in this study showed a similar trend in that they all restrict AV material in some way. All of the libraries studied limit the use of video cassettes to those over 18. Libraries B, C, and D allow videos to be borrowed free of charge, but Library A currently charges $1.00 per video with a three-day loan period. The director of this Library A plans to change the policy of charging for videos in the near future, but the 18 year age limit will remain. Director A stated that the reason for the 18 year age limit is because of the cost associated with videos. To borrow music cassettes or compact discs from Library A, a patron must be in seventh grade. To determine whether or not a patron is in seventh grade, the staff simply asks and takes the patron's word for it. The CDs and music cassettes are kept in a locked case, and must be requested by a patron. The age limit has been in place since the library began lending videos (at a time when they were more expensive), and has remained in place. The director has no plans to change the age limit for borrowing videos in the near future.

The Director of Library B stated several reasons why videos were restricted to those 18 or older. One reason, common to all the libraries in the study, is that historically it has always been done that way. When videos were very expensive it was commonly believed that children were not reliable enough to return them. Now that video prices have fallen to be comparable with that of books, this library still imposes the 18 year age requirement. The director admitted that part of the reason for the 18 year requirement is because of the controversial nature of some R-rated films. Director B feels that some parents would be upset by the idea of their children having access to these controversial materials. There is no charge for borrowing videos at this library. Compact discs and music cassettes may be checked out by patrons 14 and older. Children are allowed to obtain an adult card at the age of 14 and can therefore prove that they are of age to borrow CDs and music cassettes.

Library C also restricts the borrowing of films to adults 18 or over. Again, it has always been done this way, so the library continues this practice. Videos may be borrowed for two nights without charge. Compact discs and music cassettes may be borrowed by patrons of any age. The children's librarian requested that the 18 age year restriction be removed because it violates Article 5 of the Bill of Rights. The director agreed to consider the matter, but as yet the 18 year limit still remains in place. The children's librarian claims that the responsibility of children is not an issue since there has been no greater number of overdue CDs or cassettes than usual since children have been allowed to access them. The director admits that the R-rating of some films and their controversial nature have a bearing on the decision to keep the 18 year age restriction in place. To determine if a patron is 18 the staff simply asks and takes the patron's word for it.

The final library, Library D, restricts the borrowing of all audio-visual material to those 18 or older. The reason given for this rule is the high cost of this type of material. For those 18 and older there is no charge to borrow AV materials. Although this library includes the Ohio Library Association Freedom to View Statement (none of the other libraries adopted the Freedom to View statement) within their policies for public access, audio visual material is still not available for all.

PRINT MATERIALS

Each collection was observed to determine if "controversial" books were easily available to children or young adults. Controversial topics included those on suicide and euthanasia and these books were examined in each collection to see how easily accessible they were. In each case these books were listed in the card catalog and were readily available on the nonfiction shelves for any who cared to check them out.

The libraries studied all claim not to restrict print materials, but only Libraries A and C place absolutely no restriction on what types of print materials children may check out. Anything that is available for adults is equally accessible to children. The only print materials on restricted access in Library C are some local history and genealogy books that are considered rare or valuable, and they carry the same restrictions for adults as for children.

Library A does not restrict children in any way from accessing the adult collection. The only part of the print collection that could be considered restricted is a local history collection that is kept locked. Adults need only to request to use something from the

collection in order to obtain it. When queried as to whether children would have the same rights as adults concerning the local history collection, the director and children's librarian both said that, to their knowledge, there has never been a request by a child to use this collection, but if a child ever requested to use the local history collection that they would be able to do so with the same rules that apply to adults.

Library D does not restrict print material usage by children, but a collection of books about sex is kept behind the counter in the children's room. The reason given for this is twofold. The children's librarian states that these books are likely to be stolen and therefore must be kept where they have to be requested. Also, they are often needed to be kept in a convenient spot for ready reference. When queried as to whether the children's librarian thought that this might restrict access because some children might be too embarrassed to ask for books of this type of sensitive nature, the children's librarian said, in her observation, that children do not seem to have any inhibitions about asking for such books.

Children in Library B may access any part of the collection, but the children's room itself is totally separate from the rest of the collection. Children may check out and return children's books in the children's room without going to any other part of the library. Children may check out books from the adult collection, but they are supposed to have their parents permission to do so. To determine whether or not the child has permission to use the adult collection, the staff asks the child and takes their word for it.

PARENTAL CONSENT FORMS

Each library has some type of parental consent form that a child must have signed

before obtaining a library card. (See Appendix B.) The forms are all very similar, instructing the parent(s) that they (the parent(s)) are responsible for any damage or theft of material. The forms also inform the parent(s) that the child has access to the entire library collection (except some audio visual equipment), some of which the parent(s) may find objectionable. The consent forms further state that the parent(s) are responsible for restricting their own child's access to any materials that might be considered offensive or objectionable.

CARD CATALOG

It was interesting to see how many of the libraries studied used the sub-group of LCSH for children. All libraries studied use them if they seem easier for the child. Each children's librarian expressed a concern that the subject heading that the child would most likely look under be used. In regards to the card catalog (none of the libraries had an automated on-line system yet), all of the children's librarians were primarily concerned that children be able to find things as easily as possible. All are staffed adequately so that children needing assistance with the card catalog can obtain it.

Library B has changed the subject heading "sex" to "puberty" because of a past problem of the cards headed "sex" being stolen from the catalog. The children's librarian decided that changing the heading to "puberty" would remedy the situation. The children's librarian hopes to get an on-line catalog in the future so that these problems will not arise and the proper subject headings can be used.

AGE REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING A CARD

Libraries B and C require that a child be six years old, with a signed consent form, to obtain a card. Library A requires that a child be in first grade (with a signed consent form), regardless of age. Library D has no age restriction, requiring only that the child be able to print his/her own name to obtain the card. At a previous time the library did not even require this, but found that some parents were obtaining cards when their children were born and then borrowing and not returning books on the child's card. Once the child reached first grade and had the opportunity to visit the library through a school program he/she was not able to check out books because of past fines incurred by the parents. The children's librarian feels that withholding the card until a child can print his/her own name remedies this problem.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN PROCEDURES/REFERENCE QUERIES

None of the libraries restrict the inter-library loan service to adults only. All of the librarians agreed that children could inter-library loan items. All of the libraries treat a child's reference query as they would an adult's. Library C is staffed with both a children's librarian and a reference librarian who handle reference queries from children. If neither of the two are available the circulation staff are all familiar with the children's and reference collections, so most queries are answered.

Library D is proud to claim that no reference question goes unanswered because of their access to a regional library system. Library A, besides having a children's librarian, has a member of the circulation staff who loves children and helps them extensively with their

reference needs. Library B treats children's reference needs the same as an adult's. All queries are answered by the staff.

CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS

All of the libraries studied with the exception of Library A provided copies of formal written selection policies and procedures concerning challenged materials. Each of the three libraries have a similar form that the patron must fill out if they wish to institute a formal challenge. (See Appendix C.) Library A did not provide copies of any written policies or procedures, and when queried as to whether such policies existed for public viewing, a circulation staff person replied that the director took care of all of those types of problems.

The number of materials considered controversial differed greatly from library to library. Library C had far more controversial material than the others, and all such materials were integrated into the collection with no attempt to "hide" things. *Daddy's Roommate*, the controversial book about homosexuality, is placed in with the picture books. The only concession that this library has made to a written challenge is to give the book in question (which was about sex) a Dewey number and file it with the children's nonfiction rather than in the paperback section where it had previously been. (Paperbacks in this library don't get cataloged and are simply placed together for browsing.)

Library A has books that could be considered controversial but has never been formally challenged on any materials. Books such as *Daddy's Roommate* are shelved in with the regular books and are in no way separated or restricted.

Library has had no serious challenges, but the children's librarian emphasized that

the library adheres to careful selection policies. (See Appendix C.) These written policies, while not restrictive, give the library the necessary documentation to help patrons understand that many books of many different viewpoints must be provided for the entire community.

Library B has a very limited selection of controversial material because the children's librarian was faced with a very inadequate collection when hired, and has been working hard to build a strong, basic collection. There are few titles that could be considered controversial in this collection, but the children's librarian attributes this to budgetary problems rather than a desire to restrict access. Children's Librarian B expressed the desire to be able to buy more controversial titles, but until there is a larger budget to so feels that it is more important to buy materials that are going to be heavily used or ones that are specifically requested. However, Director B admitted to a tendency to avoid selecting controversial materials because of fear of public reprisal. This practice is restrictive since it seems unlikely that a shy or confused child would specifically request that the library buy or interlibrary loan books on such topics as sex or homosexuality.

CHAPTER III

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Even though all of the directors are aware of Article 5 of the Library Bill of Rights, it is clear that *all* of the libraries do restrict materials in one way or another. Perhaps part of the reason for this can be traced to the fact noted by Kimmel that the "notion that children have rights before the law is a relatively modern phenomenon. . . Most historians agree that before the 19th century, children were viewed as the property of their parents or guardians and had little or no rights at all, only the obligation to serve and be respectful."[16] Kimmel further notes that "Library service to children has traditionally been a part of a movement to save the child, to protect and defend the individual and the family as an institution."[17] Kimmel feels that the library, like other social institutions, must decide whether children are to be treated as status offenders simply because they are children, or if they should be given all the privileges and services available to other segments of the population. All of the librarians in this study with the exception of Children's Librarian C seem to follow the tradition that children have few rights and must be protected.

AUDIO VISUAL MATERIALS

All of the libraries restrict the borrowing of audio visual materials in some way, with the restrictions on the borrowing of video cassettes to those 18 or older being common to every library in this study. Libraries A, B, and D restrict the compact discs and music cassettes to those either in seventh grade or age 14.

Library C, the library least restrictive in regards to audio visual materials, restricts only the video cassette collection by age. The reasons cited for this are the cost of the material and the controversial nature of some R-rated films. Interpretations of Article 5 clearly state that it is "parents--and only parents--who may restrict their children--and only their children--from access to library materials."

Library B restricts video tapes to those patrons 18 or older and CDs and music cassettes to those 14 and older. The reasons given for such restrictions for videos is that patrons over 18 are more responsible and therefore more likely to return the material, but the children's librarian admitted that subject matter has a slight impact on the decision to have an age limit.

Library A has an 18 year age restriction on videos as well as a $1.00 per video fee. The director intends to remove the fee in the near future and allow videos to be borrowed free of charge, but the age restriction will still apply. Cost was the reason given for the age restriction, as once again it is believed that adults would be more responsible than children in regards to video cassettes. Compact discs and music cassettes may be checked out by patrons who are in the seventh grade or older. To determine whether or not a patron is in the seventh grade, the librarians simply ask and take the patron's word for it.

Library D is more restrictive than the others in its audio visual policies. A patron must be at least 18 years of age to borrow any type of audio visual material from this library. No reason other than cost of materials was given for this restriction. Clearly all of the libraries in this study are in violation of the Library Bill of Rights. In her article about library service to children, Diana Young cites the Task Force on Children's Services of the

Public Library Association: "Libraries, together with other community agencies, should provide and ensure access by all children to information services that include a *diversity of media, both print and nonprint . . .*"[18] (Emphasis mine).

Robert Pierson adds weight to the argument that children should not be restricted from access to materials. He believes that children need to be exposed to many various ideas in order to become critical thinking adults. This is obvious when he states that "society is on the whole strengthened rather than weakened by tolerance of variation."[19]

John Hurley specifically addresses the issue of free access to video collections by minors:

> This kind of discrimination is frequently justified on the basis of cost of the item and likelihood of damage. There have been no studies, however, to indicate that minors are more likely to damage a video cassette than are their parents.[20]

Obviously the argument that children are not as responsible as adults is pointless without data to back it up. Hurley suggests ways to cover the cost of lost or damaged videos. He points out that most libraries have a form that parents must sign in order for their children to obtain their own library card. Within the wording of these forms the parent agrees to assume responsibility for the cost of the items borrowed by the child. Hurley believes that a simple clause in the wording of the form to include video cassettes (or even a separate video registration card that the parent signs) could stop the discrimination against minors. The parents would be responsible for fines and damage fees for the video cassettes, as well as for the books, that their child borrows.

Norton R. Webster, Legal Counsel to the Ohio Library Association, responded to

concerns about minors and video cassettes by advising libraries to "continue to adhere to a policy of free access to minors."[21] He opposed libraries' use of MPAA ratings as "inappropriate for libraries and potentially challengeable under the First Amendment."[22] Clearly, any library that restricts minors' access to videos is violating the spirit of the ALA Bill of Rights

The libraries studied seem slow to accept the idea of free access for minors in regards to video cassette tapes. Most of the librarians interviewed adhere to the 18 year age limit. None, with the exception of Children's Librarian C, seem willing to challenge the customary practice. Maybe these librarians fear public reaction more than they care to admit. Children, perhaps not realizing that no legality binds a public library in its policy concerning video tapes, accept the rules as they are in each library.

Sadly, it seems that these libraries are more the norm than the exception. A survey report by Sheila Gabriel finds that "Loan policies in 75% of the libraries surveyed restricted borrowing to patrons over 18 years of age."[23] This restriction is obviously very common in a large majority of Ohio public libraries.

PRINT MATERIALS

The restriction of access of print materials is practiced much less than the restriction of audio visual materials, but there are still some types of restrictions. Libraries A and C do not restrict print materials in any way in regards to age. Library D's practice of keeping the sex books behind the counter for ready reference and to avoid theft could be construed as restriction. Duane H. Meyers cites a slightly similar case when he writes of a library that has

been challenged on two books about sex. The books were placed on restricted access and a survey was done to determine what other libraries did in such situations. The survey showed that "possibly a third or more of our nation's libraries have bowed, in one way or another, to demands for restriction. Or, horrible thought, maybe they do their *own* restricting! Only five of those libraries admitted they had a restrictive policy that was the result of *community* pressure."[24] This would seem to be the case with Library D and the collection of sex books. True, these types of books are often the target of theft or vandalism, but one must look at the bigger picture. A child who is too shy or embarrassed (very likely a large number of young people) to ask for such books is restricted from accessing them as surely as if they were for adults only. Although this restriction seems minor and perhaps is not done for the purpose of preventing children from accessing the materials, it is still restriction. A library which wishes to follow the Library Bill of Rights, especially the interpretation on restriction of access, should not have *any* books behind the counter. Ready reference books can be kept in a place where they are handy but still accessible without a child having to verbally request them. Or, as is the case with Library C, multiple copies of books commonly needed for ready reference could be purchased so that patrons may still access the materials without asking for them. Surely if a book is so heavily used that it warrants being set aside for ready reference it could be argued that more than one copy be owned.

This restriction is a serious problem for children. If not easily available in the public library, where are children to find reliable information about sex? Children need to know about sex, and they have a right to know, but how can a child who is perhaps too shy to ask

his/her parents about sex (or any adult for that matter) work up the courage to ask the children's librarian for books about sex? The questions raised by this practice are problematic--what if the minor in question were a teenager and had known that particular children's librarian since preschool. What if the children's librarian knew that child's parents, as is likely to happen in a small library? Would any child feel comfortable under any of these circumstances asking for books about sex?

The rationale for keeping these sex books behind the counter is not sound. After all, most public libraries probably have a large number of popular books stolen. One librarian mentioned the high theft rate of Stephen King books, but King's novels are not kept behind the counter to insure that they are not stolen.

PARENTAL CONSENT FORMS

Kay Vandergrift deals with the rules concerning circulation factors in restricting access for minors. Vandergrift feels that the "trend that emerges is that children are considered second-class users who are only given access to library resources, and often limited access, when vouched for by parents or guardians. Some libraries even require an 'in- person' visit by adults to complete the registration."[25] This was the case in Libraries C and A in this study, and even though the adult need not be present at the other two libraries, the child must have the permission form signed and returned before the card is issued.

All of the libraries require the signature of the parent before the child can obtain a library card. Janet Hildebrand, in an article concerning the privacy rights of children, states that, "Traditionally, the reason we have required the parent to sign for a child was to try to

control losses and recover the cost of lost books. . . But in my experience, children who fail to return materials usually follow a family pattern--their parents, too, exhibit similar traits."[26] If this is the case, it seems fruitless to require the parent's signature. These four libraries do not seem to require the signature in order to restrict access, however. Libraries, after all, suffer far more than other institutions when there are budget cuts. The public library must have some recourse to attempt to get some of their money back for damaged or lost materials. Legally the library cannot turn children over to a collection agency or "dun" them for the cost of materials, but legal action *can* be taken against the parents. Although few libraries resort to such drastic measures, it is not unheard of, and it seems logical that the library protect itself by requiring parents to assume responsibility for materials checked out by their children, especially if the materials are very valuable.

CARD CATALOG

Kay Vandergrift states that "Young people must contend with library catalogs that, in many instances, use vocabulary and subject headings alien to their experience."[27] She contends that young users may need some assistance in understanding and using the confusing subject headings, and that LCSH do not reflect everyday usage of the language.

The libraries in this study were uniformly concerned that children be able to access needed materials through the card catalog. Anyone who has ever used Library of Congress Subject Headings can understand how it might be difficult for children to access material by subject matter. The LC headings, which are often difficult for adults, can be especially hard

for children to understand and use. All of the libraries use the sub-group of LCSH for children, and all expressed the desire to use what is easiest for children. Two of the libraries also follow through with Bibliofile in order to make material more accessible to children.

Library B, discussed earlier with the problem of "stolen" subject heading cards for sex, is guilty of restriction. It is unlikely that most children would think to look under the heading of "puberty" for sex books, and there is no "see" or "see also" reference under the heading "sex" that would instruct the child to look under "puberty". Some younger children who have not reached puberty but still may be interested in information about sex may not even be familiar with the word puberty. In considering this dilemma, one might wonder if it would be that difficult to make several cards for the same book about sex and periodically check the card catalog to see if the card in question has been stolen, and if so replace it with the backup card. This would not be a very labor intensive task since this library is very small and has only two books under the heading "puberty." And is it likely that there are many thieves or only one? And how long would the thief or thieves keep stealing the same card for the same book? Even if the library uses "see" references under "sex" that would direct the child to the puberty section, wouldn't the thief simply steal the cards under "puberty" if he/she were so determined to remove those cards from the catalog for one reason or another?

Although automation will cure this problem, one must consider the implications of the restriction now. Automation usually takes several years to complete, and an entire generation of young people could suffer from the inability to access the books that they might badly need to educate themselves about a sensitive subject that adults often find too

uncomfortable to discuss.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

As discussed earlier, three of the libraries had a minimum age requirement for children to be able to obtain a library card, with the fourth requiring only that the child be able to print his/her own name. Although the three libraries did not seem to require this in order to restrict materials in any way, none of them had a good reason why the 6 year/first grade criteria remained in place. The libraries were once again merely following a long standing tradition that has always been.

Although this is in fact a form of restriction, it does not seem that the libraries intend it to be so. Time honored traditions are hard to break, and it is unlikely that any of the three libraries will change their age requirement policy until they are seriously challenged to do so. At any rate, most children that young are usually accompanied to the library by their parent or other adult who simply checks the child's books out on their own card until the child reaches the age required.

INTERLIBRARY LOAN PROCEDURES/REFERENCE QUERIES

All of the libraries claim to give children the same treatment as adults concerning interlibrary loan and reference query procedures. In fact, all of the librarians questioned seemed very concerned that children's questions be answered and needs be met. One must conclude that if these librarians are true to their ideals then children in these four libraries face no restrictions in these areas.

CONTROVERSIAL MATERIALS

All of the libraries claim to own and make accessible controversial materials, but as can be seen from earlier sections of this study, this not exactly true. Library D, as already noted, keeps the sex books behind the counter, and Library B buys few controversial materials because of budget limitations. For the purpose of this study few criteria were used to determine the nature of controversial materials. The actual nature of controversial books or audio visual material defies description in many instances. What is considered controversial in one community might be accepted as the norm in another. A seemingly innocent book such as Maurice Sendak's *In The Night Kitchen* has been considered "controversial" for its realistic yet appropriate depiction of nudity.

It was not the goal of this research to judge whether or not a library contained enough controversial material, but merely to determine if the libraries made such material readily available and if they adhered to their written selection policies concerning these types of materials. Library B, with budget restraints has a collection policy that purports to "provide a variety of materials, services, and programs for everyone's informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs; . . ." (See Appendix C.) Surely sex education for children and young adults should be considered a top priority in serving educational and informational needs no matter how little money is budgeted, yet this library has only two books in the children's card catalog about sex.

Selection of controversial materials is an important job for any library director regardless of budget. A library director cannot simply disregard these materials because of budgetary problems, but this library director admitted to a tendency to avoid controversy in

selection. Intellectual freedom does not allow for avoidance of controversy merely to keep things running smoothly. Doug Anderson addresses this issue when he states, "Some librarians cite possible community reaction; yet can a library the endorsed the *Library Bill of Rights* seriously consider this a valid reason for rejecting a potential purchase?"[28] Many don't realize the impact that selection can have on restriction of materials for young people. Librarians must keep an open mind when selecting any materials, especially those for children since it is all to easy to be judgmental about a work that one might not deem appropriate for youths.

Library C, with a rather less detailed selection policy (See Appendix D), has a very extensive collection of what could be classified as controversial titles for children and young adults including books about sex education, the occult, homosexuality, and AIDS. The children's librarian of this library selects the books for children and young adults, and feels that it is important for young people to be able to read as much as possible about topics that are particularly of interest to them. Few could argue that the above mentioned topics are not of interest to a large number of children and teens. This library carries no restrictions on the type or amount of books that a child or young adult may check out about any given subject.

Library D has a very detailed selection policy (See Appendix C.) The actual parts of the policy detailing children's/young adult selection are clear and concise and this library has a very good selection of children's and young adult materials. No restrictions are placed on the who might use the collection and books, other than those concerning sex which are placed behind the desk for ready reference, are easily available to readers of any age.

As discussed before Library A did not provide copies of policies for public viewing.

CONCLUSIONS

All of the libraries in this study claim to have good reasons for their age limitations on audio visual materials, but in fact this is a serious form of restriction. The libraries all claim that the materials are expensive to replace, but there is little evidence that audio visual materials are any more costly than some books. The librarians themselves admitted that part of their reasoning behind this restriction is concern over the MPAA ratings for R-rated movies, but as noted earlier these ratings do not carry the power of any law and librarians should not consider that they must adhere to them in any way.

Although the libraries differed in their restrictiveness of print materials there are some questionable practices such as placing books about sex behind the desk for ready reference. This practice raises serious problems for children who will not ask for such materials for whatever reason.

Selection is another area where access for children is important. If the materials are never purchased for the library there is no way for the child to access them. Reviews and budgets play a large part in determining what will be purchased for each library, but in general the selection policies of the four libraries are worded in such ways as to guarantee that controversial materials, if formally challenged, are protected. It does, however, seem that at least one of the library's selection of materials is adversely affected by supposed community reaction to controversial materials.

Overall, the libraries in this study claim to want to adhere to the Bill of Rights and

their selection policies, but in reality they do not. To adhere to the ideals of the ALA Bill of Rights a library must *not* restrict access to children in any way. Obviously these libraries, while providing overall very good services to minors, have a few changes to make before they can consider themselves purveyors of all types of materials for young people.

NOTES

1.Lillian N. Gerhardt, "Children's Access to Public Library Services: Prince George's County Memorial Public Library, Maryland, 1980," *Library Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1981): 20.

2.Ibid., 20-37.

3.Duane H. Meyers, " The Chronicle of One Library's Fight for Intellectual Freedom: Boys and Girls and Sex and Libraries," *Library Journal*, 15 February 1977, 457-463.

4.Robert Pierson, "Access to Information: Opinions and Speculations," *Catholic Library World* (November/December 1987): 118-121.

5.Doug Anderson, "Gay Information: Out of the Closet," *School Library Journal*, June 1992: 62.

6.Dorothy M. Broderick, "Censorship: A Family Affair?," *Top of the News* 35 (Spring 1979): 223-232.

7.Judith Serebnick, "Book Reviews and the Selection of Potentially Controversial Books in Public Libraries," *Library Quarterly* 51, no. 4 (1981): 390-409.

8.Kay E. Vandergrift, "Are Children and Teenagers Second-Class Users?," *Library Resources and Technical Services* 33 (October 1989): 393-399.

9.Ibid., 394.

10.Diana Young, "Library Service to Children--A Job or a Profession?," *Public Libraries* 20 (Spring 1981): 24-26.

11.Margaret Mary Kimmel, "Children's Rights, Parent's Rights--A Librarian's Dilemma," *School Library Journal* (October 1980): 114.

12.Marilyn L. Miller, "Children's Access to Library Systems," in *Children in Libraries: Proceedings of the Forty-first Conference of the Graduate Library School, May 16-17, 1980*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980): 40.

13.Will Manley, "Facing the Public," *Wilson Library Bulletin* (June 1990): 89-90.

14.John Hurley, "Free Access Issues and Video Collections," *New Jersey Libraries* (Fall 1989): 9-11.

15. "Videocassette Circulation: A Legal Opinion from Ohio," *Library Journal* (News section) 110 (1 May 1985): 16.

16.Kimmel, 112.

17.Ibid., 114.

18.Young, 25.

19.Pierson, 121.

20.Hurley, 9.

21."Videocassette Circulation: A Legal Opinion From Ohio," 16.

22.Ibid.

23.Sheila Gabriel, "Ohio Public Library Video Collections: A Survey Report," *Ohio Libraries* 3 (July/August 1990): 12.

24.Meyers, 462.

25.Vandergrift, 396.

26.Janet Hildebrand, "Is Privacy Reserved for Adults?: Children's Rights at the Public Library," *School Library Journal* (January 1991): 23.

27.Vandergrift, 394.

28.Anderson, 62.

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APPENDIX A

Proposed Questions for the Director

1. Are you aware of the content of Article 5 of the Library Bill of Rights?
2. How much help is available to children in searching the on-line or card catalog?
3. Are there any materials in your library that are in locked cases or on restricted access? If so, what types of materials and how are they accessed? May children access them?
4. If a child has a reference query, how is it handled?
5. Are children permitted to apply for a library card without an adult present?
6. Does this library have special cards for children that permit them to check out only certain types of materials?
7. At what age are children permitted to check out books without an adult? Videos? Compact disks?
8. Are there limits to the number of materials that a child may check out? If so, why?
9. Are children permitted to interlibrary loan materials not owned by this library?
10. Does this library have restricted reading rooms for adult only use? If so, are there rooms for children only?

Proposed Questions for the Children's Librarian

1. Are children permitted to access books from every part of the children's room regardless of grade level?

2. Are controversial books integrated into the main children's collection, or are they separated in some way?

3. Are challenged materials left on the shelf or removed until the issue is resolved?

4. If a material is challenged and not left on the shelf, is it still available to children without an adult present?

5. Does your library use the special sub-group of the Library of Congress subject headings for children?

LIBRARY B

APPENDIX B

[redacted] Library

[redacted] Street

[redacted]

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We are pleased that your child has requested a card from the [redacted] Library. Unrestricted access to reading materials is one of the most important factors in encouraging a child to read (next to seeing that reading is valued by parents). We hope this is the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship between your child and the Library.

Will you please complete and sign the attached application card? Since this is an agreement between the Library and your child, we require your signature to finish the registration. It is important that you understand that in signing this card you accept financial responsibility for any materials checked out on the card.

With a library card your child has unrestricted access to all the resources of our Library (excepting specific audio-visual materials and equipment). While the Library staff will guide and recommend materials to all its patrons, they will not restrict a child's choice of books or the use of other materials. The Library serves the entire community with its wide variety of tastes, reading levels, and intellectual and philosophical backgrounds.

This policy reflects standard library practice as defined by the American Library Association in the Library Bill of Rights. This standard states "a person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background or views."

All libraries contain some materials which parents may find objectionable or inappropriate for their children. Because our staff will not engage in institutional censorship, we suggest that you may wish to be aware of what your child is borrowing. The Library encourages such interest in reading and believes the responsibility for any restrictions on a child's borrowing privileges remains with the parent or guardian.

We look forward to serving you and your family for many years.

Truly,

[redacted]
Director

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

[redacted] Library

[redacted]

Child's name_____

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We are pleased that your child has requested a library card from the [redacted] Library of [redacted]. Obtaining a library card is an important stage of growth for most young people. We hope that this is the beginning of a long and friendly relationship between your child and the library.

Will you please complete the Parent/Guardian section of the attached form? Since this is a "contract" with a minor, we do require your signature to finish the registration. It is important that you understand that in signing you accept financial responsibility for any materials checked out on the card. Please sign at the bottom of this letter as well.

With this card your child has unrestricted access to all resources of our library (excepting some audio-visual materials). The library staff will not restrict your child's choice of books or use of other library materials. It is our policy to serve people of all ages with a broad selection of library materials.

All libraries contain some materials which some parents occasionally find objectionable or inappropriate for their children. Because our staff does not monitor the choices a child makes, we suggest that you may wish to make yourself aware of what your child borrows from the library. Responsibility for any restrictions on a child's borrowing privileges rests with the parent or guardian.

Your signature on this letter and on your child's registration form indicates your understanding of library policy regarding the borrowing of materials by your child. We look forward to many years of service to your family in meeting your reading and information needs.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Director

_____ _____

Signature of parent or guardian Date

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

[redacted] *Public Library*

[redacted]

Dear Parent or Guardian:

We are pleased that your child has requested a library card from the [redacted] Public Library. Obtaining a library card is an important stage of growth for most young people. We hope that this is the beginning of a long and friendly relationship between your child and the library.

Will you please complete the Parent/Guardian section of the attached form? Since this is a "contract" with a minor, we do require your signature to finish the registration. It is important that you understand that in signing you accept financial responsibility for any materials checked out on the card.

With this card your child has unrestricted access to all resources of our library (excepting some audio-visual materials.) The library staff will not restrict the child's choice of books or use of other library materials. It is our policy to serve people of all ages with a broad selection of library materials.

All libraries contain some materials which some parents occasionally find objectionable or inappropriate for their children. Because our staff does not monitor the choices a child makes, we suggest that you may wish to be aware of what your child borrows from the library. The responsibility for any restrictions on a child's borrowing privileges rests with the parent or guardian.

Your signature on the bottom of this form, which will be attached to your child's registration form, signifies your understanding of Library policy regarding the borrowing of materials by your child. We look forward to many years of service to your family in meeting your reading and information needs.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Director

Parent or Guardian Signature

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

APPENDIX C

LIBRARY B

[redacted] LIBRARY

BOOK COMPLAINT FORM

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

TELEPHONE NUMBER: _____

GROUP REPRESENTED, IF ANY: _____

_____

TITLE OF THE BOOK IN QUESTION: _____

_____

AUTHOR OF THE BOOK IN QUESTION: _____

AGE OF BORROWER: [ ]under 6, [ ]7 to 12, [ ]13 to 16, [ ]16 to 18, [ ] over 18

If you are not the borrower under what circumstances did this book come to your attention?

Have you read the entire book? [ ] YES [ ] NO

Describe briefly your objections to the book in general:

Are there specific items or passages in the book to which you object (please cite chapter or page numbers):

Are you aware of any critical reviews dealing with this book (please cite review scource, author, volume number and/or date of publication, and page numbers; if a copy of the review is available please attach)?

Do you feel that this book is inappropriate for certain age groups?
[ ] YES [ ] NO

If so, at what age would this book no longer be objectionable?

_____SIGNATURE _____DATE

_____SIGNATURE _____DATE

Materials are selected for inclusion in the Library's collection based on public need, popularity, specific requests, critical or historic importance, representation of western thought of philosophy, and informational value. The [redacted] library serves the entire community with its wide variety of tastes reading levels, and intellectual and philosophical backgrounds. Patrons should be aware that the Board of Trustees' policy endorses the "Library Bill of Rights", which restricts access to no individual. The Board further recognizes that it is the responsibility of parents or guardians to monitor the reading activities of their children under the age of 18. The Library encourages such interest in reading will engage in no form of institutional censorship.

LIBRARY USE ONLY

REVIEWED BY DIRECTOR / / . COMMENTS:_____

_____

_____

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES / / . COMMENTS:_____

_____

PATRON INFORMED OF ACTION / / . COPY OF LETTER ATTACHED: [ ]YES [ ] NO.

Approved 3/10/86

APPENDIX III.

[redacted]

Request for Review of Library Material

Author _____

Title _____

Publisher/Producer _____

CHECK ONE:

Book _____ Periodical _____ Video _____ Sound Recording _____ Other _____

Request filed by:

Name: _____ Card no.: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone no.: _____

[redacted]

Do You represent: _____ Yourself? or _____ an organization?

Name of organization: _____

1. To what in the work do you object? (Please be specific; cite pages, scenes, etc.) _____

2. Did you read/view/listen to the entire work? _____ What parts? _____

3. What do you feel might be the effects of this work? _____

4. What did you find of merit in this work? _____

5. For what audience would you recommend this work? _____

6. What do you believe to be the theme of this work? _____

7. Are you aware of judgments of this work by literary/film/music critics? _____

8. What action would you propose for the library to take regarding this work? _____

9. What work would you recommend that would convey as valuable a picture and perspective of this subject? _____

Signature _____

Date _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

[redacted] LIBRARY
MATERIAL COMPLAINT FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number(s): _____

Title of item in question: _____

Author (if book): _____

Age of Borrower: ( ) Under 6, ( ) 7 - 12, ( ) 13 - 16,
( ) 16 - 18, ( ) Over 18

If you are not the borrower, under what circumstances did this item come to your attention?

Have you read/viewed the item in its entirety? ( ) Yes ( ) No

Describe briefly your objections to the item in general.

Are there specific sections or passages in the work to which you object? Please cite chapter, page or approximate location of the objectionable passages.

Are you aware of any critical reviews dealing with this book? Please cite review source, author, volume number and/or date of publication, and page numbers. If a copy of the review is available, please attach.

Do you believe that this item is inappropriate for certain age groups?
( ) Yes ( ) No

If yes, at what age would this book no longer be objectionable?
_____

Signature _____ Date _____

LIBRARY USE ONLY:

Director's Comments:

Signature _____ Date _____

Board of Trustees' Comments:

President _____ Date _____

Patron Informed of Action:

Signature _____ Date _____

Revised and Adopted by the Board of Trustees September 17, 1990

Do you believe that this item is inappropriate for certain age groups?
( ) Yes ( ) No

If yes, at what age would this book no longer be objectionable?
_____

Signature _____ Date _____

LIBRARY USE ONLY:

Director's Comments:

Signature _____ Date _____

Board of Trustees' Comments:

President _____ Date _____

Patron Informed of Action:

Signature _____ Date _____

Revised and Adopted by the Board of Trustees September 17, 1990

Collection Development Policy

Statement of Purpose

Due to the volume of publishing, space and budget limitations, and the existence of specialized collections in the area, the [redacted] Library must have a collection development policy with which to meet community interests and needs. The purpose of this policy is to guide the selection of materials and to inform the public of the principles upon which selection is made. It also provides information which will guide the staff in the budget allocation process.

Community Resources

The [redacted] Library cooperates with community agencies, groups, organizations, institutions, and other libraries to provide the means of resource sharing on a city, county, regional, and state level to improve its services to the greater [redacted] Community. To avoid unnecessary duplication of materials in the community, one factor in selection will be a consideration of the kinds of materials available to the public through other institutions and agencies (e.g. [redacted], other public libraries in the county).

Community Served

The [redacted] Library serves a rural community with many groups of varying economic, ethnic, and educational background. The Library provides these groups with materials, services, and programs for their education, information, recreation, and edification. The Library serves a population of over 5,000 within the [redacted] corporate limits and over 15,000 in [redacted] County.

The Library is an incorporated school district library serving the legal service area of the [redacted] School District. This service area includes the corporate [redacted] and three precincts beyond the city boundaries.

Philosophy and Goals

The Board of Trustees of the [redacted] Library, working with the staff of the Library, affirm the following statement of purpose:

To serve all people;

To Provide a variety of materials, services, and programs for everyone's informational, educational, recreational, and cultural needs;

To provide a qualified staff to give guidance in the use of materials;

To inform the public of resources and services;

To initiate a leadership role in the community's intellectual, cultural, and educational services;

To support intellectual freedom for all.

In a free society, information on all points of view in all fields should be readily available so that individuals may decide which ideas are meaningful to them. The public library is the institution which provides free access to these ideas, even though they may be unacceptable to some. Consequently, the Library has the responsibility for selecting materials which reflect divergent and unusual points of view. The Library has the responsibility to protect the rights of all users; it does not limit the scope of its collection; neither are materials placed in restricted areas because some individuals may object to their accessibility. No material shall be excluded because of the race, nationality, political affiliation, or social viewpoint of the person responsible for its creation.

Librarians and staff members offer guidance in the individuals choice of materials. The selection of materials and monitoring their use is entirely the responsibility of the individual, or for minors, with their parent or legal guardian.

Children's Services

Special attention must be given to the use of library materials by children. To this end the Library provides a separate children's book collection with a wide variety of materials and formats. Unrestricted access to reading and reading related materials is one of the most important factors in encouraging a child to read. In signing a library card application a parent or guardian is accepting both financial responsibility for the materials being borrowed, as well as, intellectual responsibility for what their child selects to read. While the Library staff will guide and recommend materials to all its patrons, they will not restrict a child's choice of books or the use of other materials. All libraries contain some materials which parents may find objectionable or inappropriate for their children. Because the Library does not engage in institutional censorship, parents or guardians should be aware of their child's borrowing. The Library encourages such interest in reading and believes the responsibility for any restrictions on a child's borrowing privileges remains with the parent or guardian.

Objective

The objective of the [redacted] Library is to select, organize, preserve, maintain, and make freely available to the people of the community reading and reading related materials, in a variety of media and formats, within the limitations of space, budget, and staff, to aid them in their pursuit of education, information, research, recreation, culture, and in the creative or fulfilling use of leisure time.

Within the limitations of space, budget, and staff, the Library will provide the hardware, equipment, or ancillary items, necessary for the use of library materials. The [redacted] Library provides materials, services and programming on an equal basis to all residents of its service area in order to achieve its aforementioned objectives.

Materials Selection Policy

The [redacted] Library is a multi-purpose organization which provides educational, informational, and recreational materials, services, and programs for children and adults in the city of [redacted] and [redacted] County. Basic to this service is the judicious selection, organization, and supply of reading and reading related materials.

The Board of Trustees recognizes the Library's role as an educational and informational center for the public, and affirms that its major concern must be to contribute toward the removal of ignorance. With this concern the Library serves as the repository for western culture within the community, as well as, an introductory point to non-western culture.

Authority to Select

The Library Director and staff members as designated by the Director will select those items, that in their judgement, and within the context of the Materials Selection and Collection Development Policies, will be of greatest value and use to the community immediately and in the years to come. Any material so selected shall be held to be selected by the Board of Trustees.

With the overwhelming volume of materials available to the public, the Board realizes the impossibility of the Library staff reading every item available. Therefore, the Library staff may select items based on the following criteria:

A. Patron requests

B. Book reviews

C. Information value or content

D. Popularity

E. Importance to Western Culture or Civilization

F. Literary, historic, or cultural merit

G. Recommendations by professionals with knowledge or expertise in a subject or area

H. Inclusion in recommended reading and best seller lists, bibliographies, notes, or references

I. Creation by local author or artist

J. Support of area school curriculums

K. Current Interest or news worthiness

L. Preservation of local history and culture

Materials meeting any one of these criteria and within the Library's physical and budgetary limitations may be selected for the collection.

The Library's primary concern is with personal or individual development rather than with the refinement and extension of the vast body of exiting knowledge. While the Library may encourage and support primary or original research as appropriate to the needs of the community, staff, and Board of Trustees, its emphasis is placed on materials of general interest, materials of interest to the non-specialized reader. To satisfy occasional demand for highly specialized, expensive, or rare materials of interest only to the advanced researcher, the Library will depend on interlibrary loan service and referral to appropriate special collections.

Area Guidelines

Fiction is evaluated on the basis of one or more of the following criteria: true representation of the topic chosen by the author; effective sustaining of the reader's interest; plausible plot; structural soundness; clarity of style; vitality and consistencies in characterization; popularity of the author and/or genre.

Non-fiction is chosen in consideration of these elements: significance of subject; accuracy; authority; bibliographic integrity; sufficient scope; presentation of an informative point of view; current interest or relevance; format; effectiveness in presentation; and potential usefulness to the collection.

Non-print materials (e.g. video tapes, compact discs) combine the elements of both fiction and non-fiction with special attention to the artistic and technical quality, as well as, the value of the content for individual or group appreciation or discussion.

Rental books from a subscription service are used for items that are extremely popular for a time but may not be of permanent value to the collection or for titles in high demand requiring multiple copies to meet a temporary need. When these books have reached their amortization date (approximately eight months) they may be evaluated for inclusion in the permanent collection or for return to the service.

Periodicals, serials, and newspapers are selected in the same manner as other resources. They are purchased to provide

material on current issues, research, and general reading. The principles governing their selection and retention are: community interest; accuracy; objectivity; accessibility through indicies; need in reference work; and presentation of a variety of viewpoints. Timely items are of importance to students and patrons in need of materials before they may be available in book form. Items are acquired by subscription and gift. Those with future reference value will be retained for as long as that value lasts.

Local History/Genealogy is the one area of collection development whose scope stretches beyond materials of general interest to items of interest to the specialized reader. Within the limitations of space, budget, and staff the Library will attempt to gather all materials of permanent value it can relating to the history, economic development, and genealogy of the [redacted] area. These materials are often of limited availability and permanent value. Without an aggressive pursuit and retention of such items they may pass out of the community's grasp forever.

Children's Department Materials are subject to the same judicious selection procedures as all other library materials. However, special attention must be placed on materials that encourage youthful curiosity of the world, engender a desire to read and pursue knowledge, and meet the varying reading levels of children from preschool to middle grades.

Authority for the selection of materials in the Children's Department rests with the Children's Librarian, with consultation and cooperation with the Library Director and within the context of the Materials Selection and Collection Development Policies.

Re-evaluation of Library Materials

In the event that a patron may find materials selected for inclusion in the Library's collection objectionable a procedure for voicing those concerns is available. The following steps are to be observed:

1. Patrons are encouraged to verbally discuss their concerns with the Library Director or Children's Librarian, as appropriate. The Library welcomes constructive criticism and informed opinion as a guide to the public's reading tastes and community's needs.

2. Should a patron wish to formally present a complaint about material they must file a written book complaint form as approved by the Board of Trustees.

3. The Library Director or Children's Librarian, as appropriate, will respond in writing within thirty days of the filing of a book complaint form.

4. The patron may, within ten days of the written response, request in writing that the book complaint be submitted to the Board of Trustees for appeal at their next regularly scheduled meeting.

5. Upon receipt of the written request for appeal the Director will inform the Board of Trustees of the book complaint and the patron's appeal will be placed on their agenda for consideration.

All decisions of the Board of Trustees are final. Patrons should be aware of the Library's Collection Development and Materials Selection Policies, as well as, the Library's commitment to freedom of access to a variety of materials. Filing a book complaint form is a review process and not an automatic removal mechanism.

MATERIAL SELECTION POLICY

Which ideas will be represented in the Library?

The public library is the institution in our society which provides material representing all points of view in all fields, including political, social, and religious, no matter how controversial or how objectionable these ideas may be to some people. In a democratic society, individuals should feel free to explore any and all ideas in order to decide which are meaningful to them. Therefore, the library, within the limits of selection standards, budget, and space, chooses representative material espousing all points of view.

For what purpose is library material selected?

The primary objective of the public library is to serve as a communications center for the total community by providing free and open access to the ideas and information available on all subjects and in all media. The [redacted] Library selects and makes available material for the enlightenment, cultural development, and the enjoyment of its public at all ages and levels of ability and interest.

The material is selected for all patrons of the [redacted] Library. When justified by demand, multiple copies are provided. Consideration is given to material which may be of interest to only a few patrons as well as that of interest to many patrons. Under a cooperative program, the [redacted] Library obtains, through interlibrary loan, materials owned by other libraries.

How does the library select some materials and not others?

Ideally, all publications and all media should be available to everyone. However, budgetary and space constraints limit all libraries' ability to purchase material. Therefore, qualitative selection standards have been developed by specialists in adult, young adult, children's, and audiovisual services. Librarians evaluate material on the basis of these standards and recommendations from acceptable professional and commercial reviews. Popularity and community demand are among the major criteria for selecting material.

Fiction is evaluated by the following criteria: true representation of the aspect of life described by the author, effectiveness in sustaining the reader's interest, a plausible plot, structural soundness and clarity of style, and vitality and consistency in characterization. Particular attention is paid to material that develops literary and artistic appreciation.

Nonfiction is chosen on the basis of the following factors: concern with subjects of significance, accuracy, scope, current interest or relevance, an acceptable format, uniqueness of perspective, and effectiveness in presentation.

Ordinary standards of writing quality may be waived for material representing a point of view not otherwise available. In order to comply with the American Library Association's **Library Bill of Rights** and **Intellectual Freedom Statement**, books on controversial subjects or issues, though written in an extreme or sensational manner, may be acquired.

Audiovisual material is selected to make the best use of the unique features of each medium and for its artistic and technical quality, content, and impact.

[redacted] LIBRARY

Material Selection Policy

OBJECTIVES:

The [redacted] Library provides, on equal terms, free service to all individuals resident in Ohio.

The Library's basic objective is the provision and servicing of a collection of library materials which aid the individual in the pursuit of education, economic competence, satisfactory social relationships, adequate citizenship, and the creative use of leisure time.

Through stimulation and guidance, Library personnel promote the use of the collection to the end that children, young adults, men and women, may have opportunity and encouragement for their fullest development as individuals, as members of the family, as well informed and useful citizens.

Since the Library's prime concern is with personal development rather than with the refinement and extension of existing knowledge, emphasis in material selection is placed on works of general interest - works of interest to the non-specialized user. To satisfy occasional demand for highly specialized and expensive items in the technical fields - materials which are of interest only to the advanced research worker, the Library will depend on interlibrary loan service.

IMPLEMENTATION:

In selecting new titles major emphasis is placed on the education and information functions. In this context, an item has "educational" value if it contributes to the positive growth of the individual, either as an individual or in relation to society; society, in this case, embracing relationships as narrow as those of the family and as broad as world citizenship.

The above definition of education enters into fields that a narrower definition might classify as "recreational" or "aesthetic appreciation." It includes materials which are purely for entertainment. It includes the famous works of other nations as well as those produced in America. It includes the most important works of the world's original thinkers in the fields of the social and physical sciences and the fine arts. It includes both permanent value materials and timely, current value materials on urgent public issues.

Whether fulfilling the education or information functions, the decision to buy a given item will be based on affirmative answers to the following questions: Is the author/producer an authority on the subject, and the publisher/distributor in good repute? Is there a real need for

the material? If the item is biased, is there another side of the question? Is the information it contains accurate and current? Does the title appear, or is it likely to appear in various bibliographies and indices? Are the physical features (index, maps, charts, illustrations, bibliographies, cassette, tape, disc, type, paper and binding) adequate?

Other standards to be used in making the decision to buy apply particularly to fiction titles. In general, it may be said that the requirements of fiction are truth and art. Truth implies vitality in the rendering of human beings, valid psychology, consistency in the relationship of cause and effect and of motive and action, verisimilitude of background. Art implies skill in workmanship, sound structure, and good style. These two qualities are constantly being sought for in selecting materials for the collection.

Specific questions to be asked before buying a work of fiction are: Is the work a valid representation of life? Is the author's/producer's purpose sincere? Are the characterizations well drawn? Is the plot sound and original? Is dramatic interest sustained? Does the work show any degree of creative power? Does it inspire or entertain? If a sex theme is employed, are sexual matters dealt with good taste and restraint?

While questions like these help to evaluate fiction and its manner of representation, they cannot be applied indiscriminately to every work of fiction. Only a masterpiece would possess all of the desired qualifications. Some of these qualifications are mutually incompatible, or debatable. If an item has these qualifications, or approaches reasonably close to having them, it may be considered for purchase.

Currently a very large percentage of the fiction which is on the market is not of a permanent value. For materials which will be popular for a short period of time, the Library subscribes to a book rental service. When these materials have achieved their amortization date (about eight months from purchase) they are evaluated for the permanent collection. Those we want to keep are purchased ay 75% discount, and the remainder are returned to the rental agency.

Young Adults:

The ultimate aim of library work with young adults is to contribute to the development of well-rounded citizens of their own country and the world. To this end, adult titles are selected that are keyed to the young person's needs and interests, as well as materials that tend to open up new interests in cultural, economic and social fields. Some titles written/produced especially for young adults are naturally included in the young adult collection. Since users of teen

age vary widely in ability and background, the materials selected for them will of necessity vary widely in content and ease of assimilation. All titles are purchased in the hope that they will lead to a continued materials' use in adult fields on as a high a level as possible.

Children:

The Library's objective in selecting titles for children is to instill in the child a desire to use materials, and to guide him/her toward the enjoyment and appreciation of good works. In selecting materials for children, the Children's Librarian will attempt to anticipate the diverse aptitudes and interests of users at all ages, from the beginner to the child who is ready to use materials in the young adult collection. Selection will also reflect the needs of the slow-learning child whose interests are more mature than his/her reading/viewing skills. Some material for the guidance of parents who wish to stimulate the child's interests is also available in the adult collection.

No effort will be made to supply textbooks as such, but if a textbook is needed for its informational value, it will be purchased.

All new titles, both fiction and non-fiction, will be closely examined for suitability before being added to the juvenile collection. Duplication of desirable titles will be emphasized, rather than the addition of mediocre titles for the sake of something new.

AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR MATERIAL SELECTION:

The Children's Librarian will exercise immediate authority and be immediately responsible for selection of materials for the juvenile collection. Final authority and responsibility for selection of materials in the juvenile, young adult and adult collections will rest with the Director, who will operate within the limits of the foregoing policies, which have been approved by the Board of Trustees.

Revised July 16, 1990

Approved by the Board of Trustees September 17, 1990

[redacted] LIBRARY

Gift Materials Policy

The [redacted] Library welcomes gifts of books, pamphlets, periodicals and audio-visual materials. Gifts are accepted from the donor with the complete understanding that all gifts become the property of the library with no restrictions. Once given, no materials can be returned to the donor.

The library does not appraise gift materials for tax purposes. A letter of receipt stating the number of items given can be sent to the donor, who can then assign a value.

Gift items will be added to the collection only when they meet the same standards as outlined in the Materials Selection Policy. In no case will a gift be added to the collection solely because it is a gift.

Gifts of a large collection falling into subject areas not widely developed in the collection are evaluated based on the Materials Selection Policy, with a determination as to probable use, space required and cost of maintenance.

The library does not accept gifts of plants, trees, animals or other living items.

Gifts of equipment, antiques, artifacts or other museum type items, sculpture, art, etc. will be evaluated on an individual basis, and accepted only if the item enhances the library's overall mission, and if space and cost of maintenance permits.

The library reserves the right to dispose of gifts in any manner deemed appropriate.

Adopted: November 18, 1991

[redacted] LIBRARY

Policy on Material Selection and Censorship

The [redacted] Library Board of Trustees recognizing the needs of all citizens, regardless of age, race, national origins or social or political views declares as a matter of library material selection policy that:

1. Library material selection is and shall be vested in the library director and under his (her) direction such members of the professional staff who are qualified by reason of education and training. Any library material so selected shall be held to be selected by the Board.

2. Selection of library material shall be based on critical or historical importance, merit, representation of western thought or philosophy, quality, accuracy, informational value, as well as public need, popularity, and specific requests. No library material shall be excluded because of race, nationality or the political or social views of the author.

3. This Board believes that censorship is a purely individual matter and declares that while anyone is free to reject for himself (herself) materials which he (she) does not approve of, he (she) cannot exercise this right of censorship to restrict the freedom to read and to view of others. The Board further recognizes that it is the responsibility of a parent or guardian to monitor the reading and viewing activities of his (her) children under the age of 18. Should a parent or guardian not wish his (her) child to have an adult card he (she) should notify the library director in writing.

4. The library maintains three categories of borrowers based on reading level:

A juvenile card is issued to any child under 14 years of age or below the ninth grade who can sign his name. A parent's signature is required on both the application card and the permission letter (see attached).

A young adult card is issued to a child in grades 7 or 8 whose parent or guardian has signed a permission letter (see attached letter).

An adult card is issued to anyone 14 years of age or over or upon entering the ninth grade.

5. This Board defends the principles of the freedom to read and to view and declares that whenever censorship is involved no library material shall be removed from the library except by a unanimous vote of the entire Board.

6. This Board adopts and declares that it will adhere to and support the Library Bill of Rights by the American Library Association; the Freedom to Read statement and the Freedom to View Statement by the Ohio Library Association, all of which are made a part hereof (see attached).

Revised July 16, 1990

Reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees September 17, 1990

AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Library Bill of Rights

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

Adopted June 18, 1948
Amended February 2, 1961, June 27, 1967, January 23, 1980
by the American Library Association Council

Adopted by the Ohio Library Association Board of Directors
May 14, 1982

Reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees September 17, 1990

OHIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Freedom to Read Statement

The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove books from sale, to censor textbooks, to label "controversial" books, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as citizens devoted to the use of books and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating them, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

We are deeply concerned about these attempts at suppression. Most such attempts rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary citizen, by exercising his critical judgment, will accept the good and reject the bad. The censors, public and private, assume that they should determine what is good and what is bad for their fellow citizens.

We trust Americans to recognize propaganda, and to reject it. We do not believe they need the help of censors to assist them in this task. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

We are aware, of course, that books are not alone in being subjected to efforts at suppression. We are aware that these efforts are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, films, radio and television. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an ever larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of uneasy change and pervading fear. Especially when so many of our apprehensions are directed against an ideology, the expression of a dissident idea becomes a thing feared in itself, and we tend to move against it as against a hostile deed, with suppression.

And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with stress.

Now as always in our history, books are among our greatest instruments of freedom. They are almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. They are the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. They are essential to the extended discussion which serious thought requires, and the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures towards conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free men will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

1. It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.

Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until his idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept which challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.

2. Publishers, librarians and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what books should be published or circulated.

3. Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one man can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

3. It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to determine the acceptability of a book on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.

A book should be judged as a book. No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free men can flourish which draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

4. There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.

To some, much of modern literature is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters taste differs, and taste cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised which will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

5. It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept with any book the prejudgment of a label characterizing the book or author as subversive or dangerous.

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for the citizen. It presupposes that each individual must be directed in making up his mind about the ideas he examines. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

6. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large.

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society each individual is free to determine for himself what he wishes to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and inoffensive.

7. It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression. By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, bookmen can demonstrate that the answer to a bad book is a good one, the answer to a bad idea is a good one.

The freedom to read is of little consequence when expended on the trivial; it is frustrated when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for his purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of their freedom and integrity, and the enlargement of their service to society, requires of all bookmen the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all citizens the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of books. We do so because we believe that they are good, possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours.

Adopted June 25, 1953
Revised January 28, 1972 by the American Library Association Council

Adopted by the Ohio Library Association Board of Directors
May 14, 1982

Reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees September 17, 1990

OHIO LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Freedom to View Statement

The freedom to view, along with the freedom to speak, to hear, and to read, is protected by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. In a free society, there is no place for censorship of any medium of expression. Therefore, we affirm these principles:

1. It is in the public interest to provide the broadest possible access to films and other audiovisual materials because they have proven to be among the effective means for the communication of ideas. Liberty of circulation is essential to insure the constitutional guarantee of freedom of expression.

2. It is in the public interest to provide for our audiences, films and other audiovisual materials which represent a diversity of views and expression. Selection of a work does not constitute or imply agreement with or approval of the content.

3. It is our professional responsibility to resist the constraint of labeling or pre-judging a film on the basis of the moral, religious, or political beliefs of the producer or filmmaker or on the basis of controversial content.

4. It is our professional responsibility to contest vigorously, by all lawful means, every encroachment upon the public's freedom to view.

Adopted by the Ohio Library Association Board of Directors
May 14, 1982

This statement is based on the Freedom to View Statement adopted by the Educational Film Library Association in February 1979.

Reaffirmed by the Board of Trustees September 17, 1990